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## WHAT NURSING MEANS TO ME

BY KATHARINE EMMA PEIRCE, A.B., 1915; R.N., 1921

*St. Albans, Vermont*

I LEFT my high school and college with the same undefined purpose and the same mass of tangled theories which fill the minds of most students. I wanted, as most people do, to find some work which would suit me and would be of some use to the world. Teaching was not attractive but was so conventional as to be almost unavoidable. Social work held out a vague appeal, but with no point of contact quite magnetic enough to lure me in. Nursing did not occur to me, because of its old bugaboo of physically exhausting and socially degrading qualities. It is because of the falseness of that reputation and my regret that nursing as a profession was never presented to me until three years after I left college that I want to tell every student and young graduate who will read, what this work has meant to me.

First of all, it means a type of work which is so fundamental and so rapidly growing in magnitude that every tiny effort of interested workers must count. Constructive education, efficient work, wholesome play, full enjoyment of life, progress of individuals or nations, depend largely upon health. In the great plan for improving health new paths are constantly being discovered which lead to fields in which a nurse may be of value. Who can stay away when she is shown that hospitals have turned from semi-prisons to places of comfort largely through the development of nursing? Who can shut her eyes to the fact that the number of babies who die every year is slowly lessening, and that there is a proven need of nurses to help bring it lower? Is there not a challenge in the fact that scientific research has produced the sure method of reducing diphtheria which only waits to be applied? Yet really permanent improvement can come only as quickly as the majority of the people come to see and accept the more enlightened methods of healthful living; and they will "see" only as trained workers help to teach them. It is a vision worth working for. Then, as a more immediate source of interest, there are the people to be helped, to be studied, to be despaired of, to be joked with, and to be liked sincerely. I defy anyone to turn back calmly to a desk and figures or even to books, after having watched some little boy fight his way back to health, and having followed his reactions to the tricks life was playing with him. There, too, is his mother, losing her drab gossipiness and apathy, as she waits and fears and reflects on her own shortcomings and gets down to simple truths. A nurse may not

look or act like the traditional "mother of the world," but she really does bring service of recognized value to families at their most dependable and sincere moments, and can be a sort of detached source of strength to them in their weariness. It is all very real and increases both one's respect and one's humility.

At the same time there is a constant stimulus to one's sense of humor as a wholesome lever. The small school boy who brings forth the unanswerable argument during one's school talk, that his grandfather never had a tooth brush in his life and never lost a tooth; the great husky man who picks up a howling youngster on each arm and sings lustily and tunelessly to quiet them; the young Jewish child who tells you innocently that her first name is "Hades";—these are but poor examples of the incidents which make one laugh through half the day, and understand people better.

As a direct benefit to me, I consider my three years' training of inestimable value, for it provided a purpose which required persistent interest, an active outlet for emotions, a practical knowledge of the basic rules of normal living and a useful foundation for almost any future activity. I wish that my satisfying experience could help to lead others into the interesting field of educational nursing work.

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## DR. LORENZ AND THE CRIPPLED CHILDREN OF THE SOUTHWEST

A DEMONSTRATION OF THE VALUE OF PUBLICITY AND A SPLENDID  
DEMONSTRATION OF PROFESSIONAL COÖPERATION

BY GRACE L. ANDERSON, R.N.

*St. Louis, Missouri*

**H**EWYWOOD BROWN, of the *New York World*, says that "If doctors knew a little more about the newspaper business they would realize that even if he had fought it tooth and nail, Dr. Lorenz could not possibly have avoided the eager attention and scrutiny of the press," also that "orthopedic surgery is not beyond the need of advertising." He goes on to say that although hundreds of cases could have been treated just as well by local surgeons, again and again it had been revealed that the parents had never thought of taking their children to anybody until they read about Dr. Lorenz in the newspapers. They had no idea what orthopedic surgery was, nor of what it could do.

The *Post Dispatch* of St. Louis, stirred by the fact revealed in Dr. Lorenz's clinics, worked out a campaign of publicity to bring out